OSTRANDER, McDONNELL & LEWIS

SUICIDE SQUAD™

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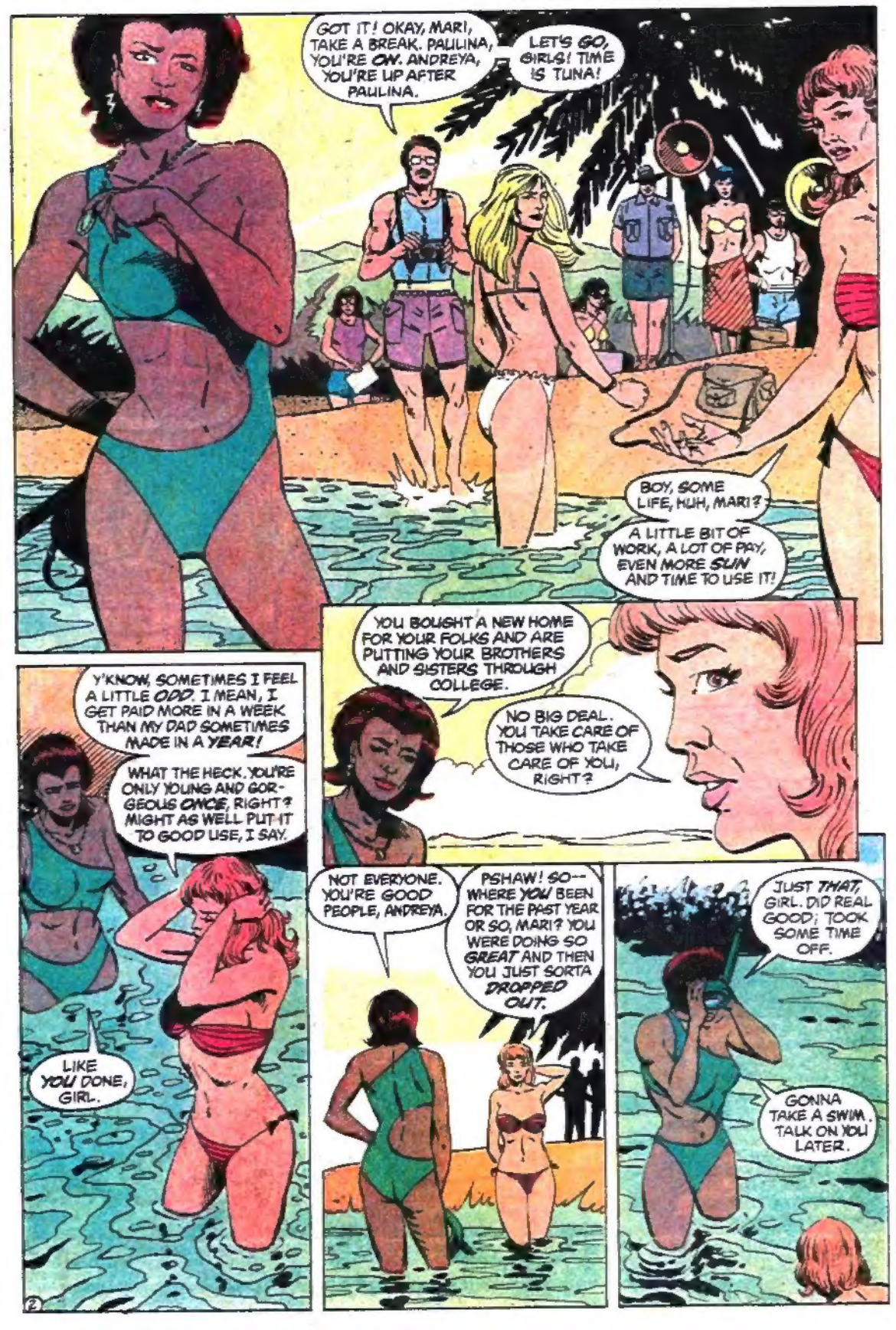
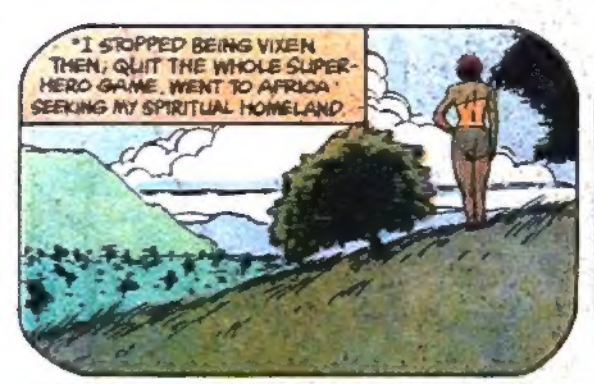
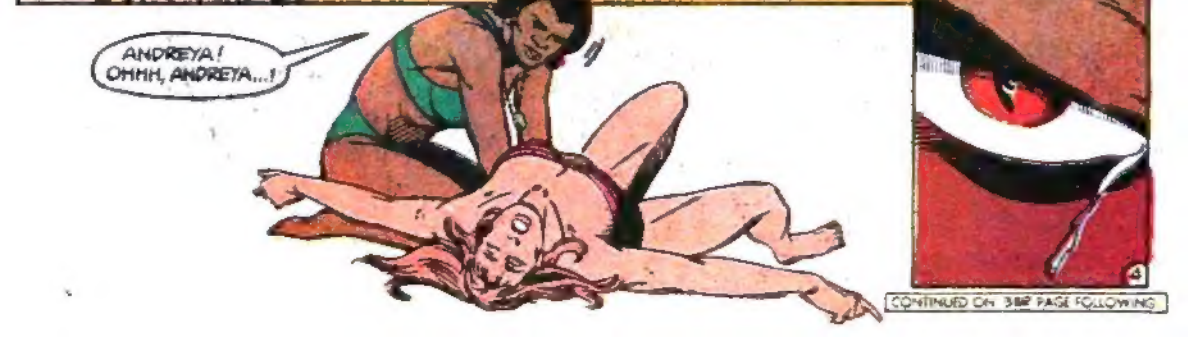

GOT IT! OKAY, MARI, TAKE A BREAK. PAULINA, YOU'RE ON. ANDREYA, YOU'RE UP AFTER PAULINA.
LET'S GO, GIRLS! TIME IS TUNA!
BOY, SOME LIFE, HUH, MARI?
A LITTLE BIT OF WORK, A LOT OF PAY, EVEN MORE SUN AND TIME TO USE IT!
YOU BOUGHT A NEW HOME FOR YOUR FOLKS AND ARE PUTTING YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS THROUGH COLLEGE.
NO BIG DEAL. YOU TAKE CARE OF THOSE WHO TAKE CARE OF YOU, RIGHT?
Y'KNOW, SOMETIMES I FEEL A LITTLE ODD. I MEAN, I GET PAID MORE IN A WEEK THAN MY DAD SOMETIMES MADE IN A YEAR!
WHAT THE HECK. YOU'RE ONLY YOUNG AND GORGEOUS ONCE, RIGHT? MIGHT AS WELL PUT IT TO GOOD USE, I SAY.
LIKE YOU DONE, GIRL.
NOT EVERYONE. YOU'RE GOOD PEOPLE, ANDREYA.
PSHAW! SO-- WHERE YOU BEEN FOR THE PAST YEAR OR SO, MARI? YOU WERE DOING SO GREAT AND THEN YOU JUST SORTA DROPPED OUT.
JUST THAT, GIRL. DID REAL GOOD; TOOK SOME TIME OFF.
GONNA TAKE A SWIM. TALK ON YOU LATER.
2

I'LL BE HERE.
SPLASH!
YOU'RE A SWEET GIRL, ANDREYA; ONE OF THE NICEST ONES I'VE MET ON THE CIRCUIT. BUT YOU SURELY STRUCK A NERVE!
WHERE HAVE I BEEN THIS PAST YEAR OR SO? SPACE AND TIME DON'T MEASURE IT.
FIRST I ACQUIRED THE TANTU TOTEM, WHICH ENABLED ME TO TAKE THE POWERS OF ANY CREATURE IN THE ANIMAL KINGDOM.
*CALLING MYSELF VIXEN, I JOINED THE ALL-NEW JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA. SOME SAY WE NEVER HELD A CANDLE TO THE OLD LEAGUE BUT I THINK WE DID OURSELVES PROUD.
*DID FINE UNTIL THE PRESIDENT ORDERED US DISBANDED AND TWO OF OUR MEMBERS GOT MURDERED!"





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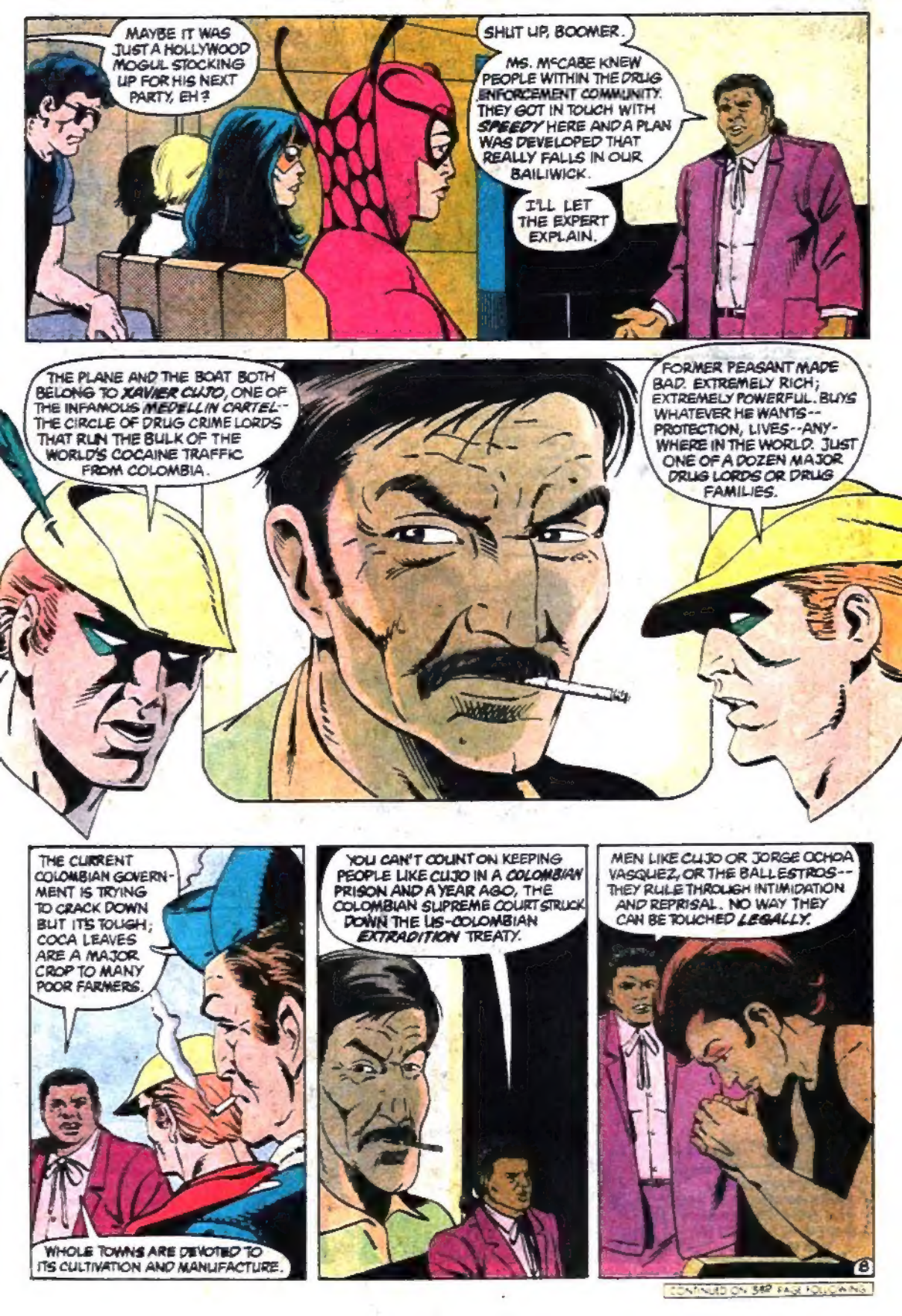
NEW ORLEANS.
BANK
HI THERE! THANKS FOR BANKING AT DIXIELAND NATIONAL BANK! AND HOW MAY I HELP YOU?
OH MY GOODNESS!
BUT YOU LOOK LIKE...
...ME!
This is a stick-up! All your money or I steal your identity
BREEEP BREEEP
OH, BUGGER!
BRANG BRANG BRANG
IT'S A SNATCH!
WHICH ONE?! WHICH ONE?!
THAT ONE!
BREEEP BREEEP
BREEEP BREEEP
MIRROR MASTER!

POP
POP
POP
BREEP BREEP
GRAB 'IM!
WHICH ONE?!
HEADIN' FOR TH' DOOR! HE'S THE REAL ONE!
BLAM
WRONGO, DRONGO! THE REAL ONE'S ALREADY GOT OUT!
BUT DAMN WALLER AND DAMN 'ER BLOODY BEEPER!
BREEP
WHERE'D HE GO?
LISTEN FOR THE BEEPER!
'ALLO! BELLE REVE! IT'S HARKNESS! CAPTAIN BLOODY BOOMERANG!
CONNECT ME THROUGH TO THE WALL! QUICK!
BREEP BREEP
BREEP BREEP YER ACRE!
'ALLO! MRS. W.! BOOMERANG! I'M HERE! WHATAYA WANT AND TURN OFF THAT BLOODY BEEPER!
TOOK YOUR TIME, DIDN'T YOU? IF YOU'D COME WHEN YOU WERE CALLED, I WOULDN'T HAVE TO TAG YOU, Y'KNOW.
I'M HERE NOW SO TURN THE BLOODY THING OFF!
BREEP
FLO, DEACTIVATE THE SIGNAL.
T.E.K.
WHATEVER YOU WAS DOIN', STOP IT AND GET OVER HERE. WE GOT A MISSION.
PHONE
ON ME WAY, MRS. WALLER, SIR.

YOU'RE LATE.
WELL, I WAS IN THE SHOWER WHEN YOU CALLED, WASN'T I? HAD TO GET DRESSED.
Y' DIDN'T WANT ME COMIN' STARKERS, NOW DIDJER?
BOOMERANG, I FIND OUT YOU BEEN SCREWING AROUND, YOUR BUTT'S IN BELLE REVE PERMANENTLY. DO YOU READ ME?
OH, FAR BE IT FROM ME TO TAKE ADVANTAGE, MRS. WALLER.
UH-HUH.
SIT YOUR BUTT DOWN. I'LL GIVE YOU THE CONDENSED VERSION TO BRING YOU UP TO DATE.
MARI McCABE HERE'S A MODEL WHO WAS ON LOCATION DOWN IN THE CARRIBBEAN FOR A PHOTO LAYOUT.
WHILE SHE WAS OFF SNORKELING, SOMEONE CAME IN AND KILLED ALL HER FELLOW WORKERS.
ALL THE CAMERAS WERE SMASHED AS WELL BUT THE FILM ALREADY SHOT WAS MISSED BY THE KILLERS.
NICE TALENT THERE. NICE, ROUND, FIRM, JIGGLY TALENT.
GOT FIVE KNUCKLES OF TALENT TO GO WITH IT, JACKASS.
WHY THE MASSACRE? THIS BLOW-UP OF THE LAST PICTURE TELLS US.
THE PHOTOGRAPHER HAD INADVERTENTLY SHOT A DRUG TRANSFER AT SEA. SOMEBODY ON THE BOAT MUST'VE SEEN THE CAMERA AND HAD EVERYONE ON SHORE WIPED OUT. JUST AS A PRECAUTION.



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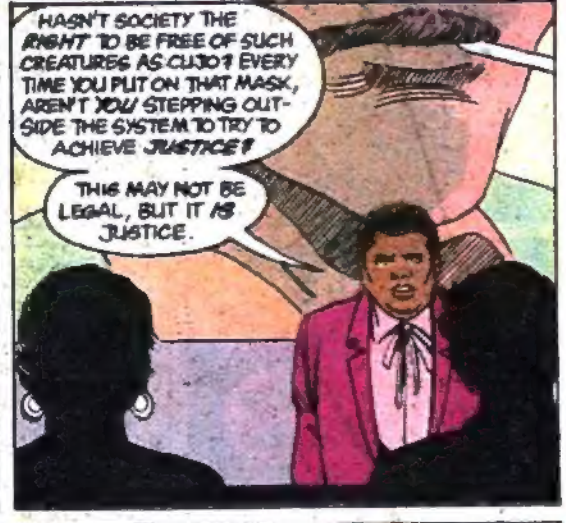
SO WE'RE GOING TO TOUCH THEM ILLEGALLY.
WE'RE GOING TO RAZE CUJO'S FORTRESS AND DESTROY ALL THE SNOW WE FIND IN THERE.
AND WE'RE GOING TO KILL CUJO.

HOW DOES THAT MAKE US ANY DIFFERENT FROM HIM?
WITHOUT DUE PROCESS, IT'S JUST MURDER.


HASN'T SOCIETY THE RIGHT TO BE FREE OF SUCH CREATURES AS CUJO? EVERY TIME YOU PUT ON THAT MASK, AREN'T YOU STEPPING OUTSIDE THE SYSTEM TO TRY TO ACHIEVE JUSTICE?
THIS MAY NOT BE LEGAL, BUT IT IS JUSTICE.

YOU'RE ALL ARGUING PRINCIPLES! THOSE PEOPLE WERE FRIENDS OF MINE! DIDN'T THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO LIVE?!
TO HELL WITH THE MURDERER'S RIGHTS! WHAT ABOUT THE VICTIM'S RIGHTS?
YOU TAKE CARE OF THE COCAINE. LEAVE CUJO TO ME!

WHAT A BUNCH OF YABBOS. WHERE'S FLAG? LET'S GET A MOVE ON! I GOT OTHER THINGS T'DO WITH ME LIFE.
HE'S ON ANOTHER MISSION.* NIGHTSHADE'S HEADING THIS TEAM UP.
*SEE THE DOOM PATROL-SUICIDE SQUAD TEAM-UP, NOW ON SALE! -- BOB

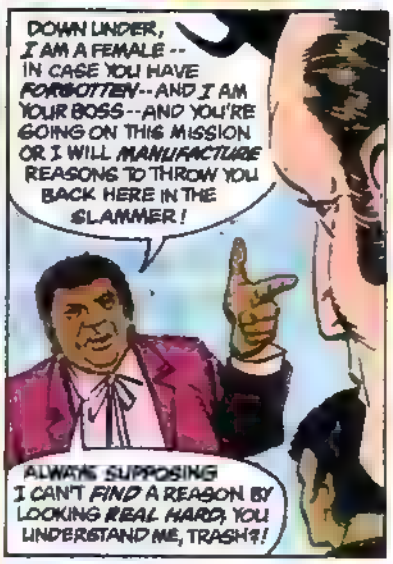
THE HELL SHE IS!
THE HELL I AM! I DON'T KNOW I EVEN WANT TO GO ON THIS MISSION!

NIGHTSHADE'S THE BEST QUALIFIED; NIGHTSHADE'S GOING. FLAG MAY NOT BE COMING BACK FROM HIS MISSION AND, IN ANY CASE, WE DON'T HAVE THE TIME TO WAIT.

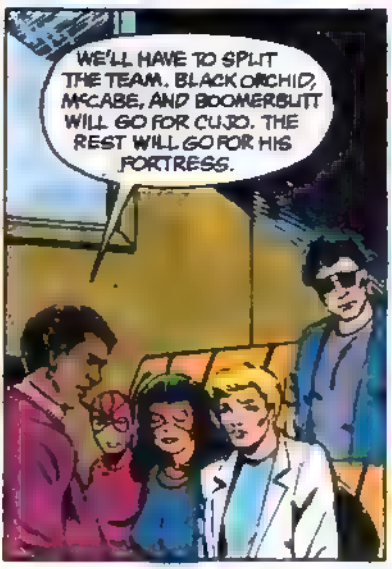
I'LL DO IT ON ONE CONDITION. YOU KNOW WHY I JOINED THIS TEAM.

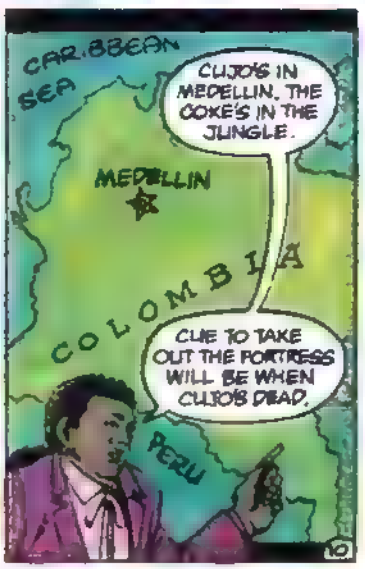
I DO WHAT YOU WANT, YOU DO WHAT I WANT AND I PICK THE DATE.
...
ALL RIGHT...!

I DON'T HAVE TO GO ON THIS BLOODY MISSION NEITHER AND I AIN'T GONNER!
I AIN'T ABOUT TO BE BOSSED BY NO FEMALE.


DOWN UNDER, I AM A FEMALE -- IN CASE YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN -- AND I AM YOUR BOSS -- AND YOU'RE GOING ON THIS MISSION OR I WILL MANUFACTURE REASONS TO THROW YOU BACK HERE IN THE SLAMMER!
ALWAYS SUPPOSING I CAN'T FIND A REASON BY LOOKING REAL HARD. YOU UNDERSTAND ME, TRASH?!

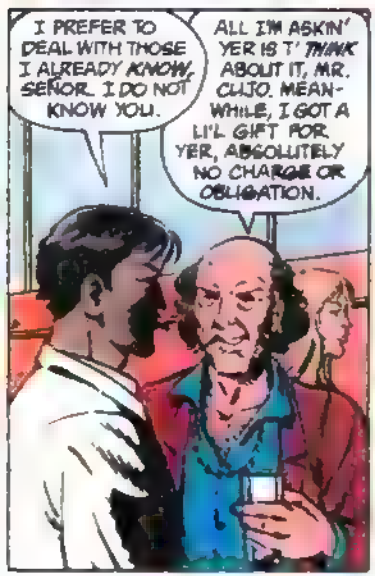
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT; DON'T PUT YER BRA IN A WRINGER. I'LL GO.

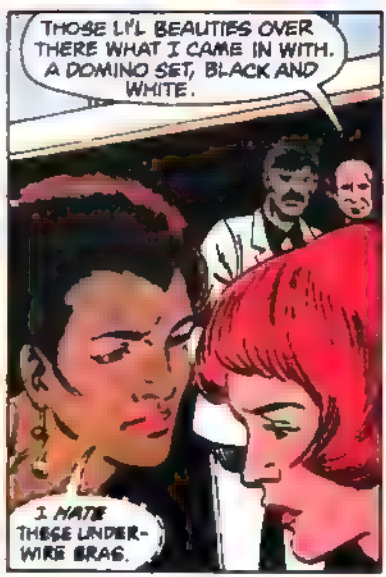

WE'LL HAVE TO SPLIT THE TEAM. BLACK ORCHID, McCABE, AND BOOMERBUTT WILL GO FOR CUJO. THE REST WILL GO FOR HIS FORTRESS.

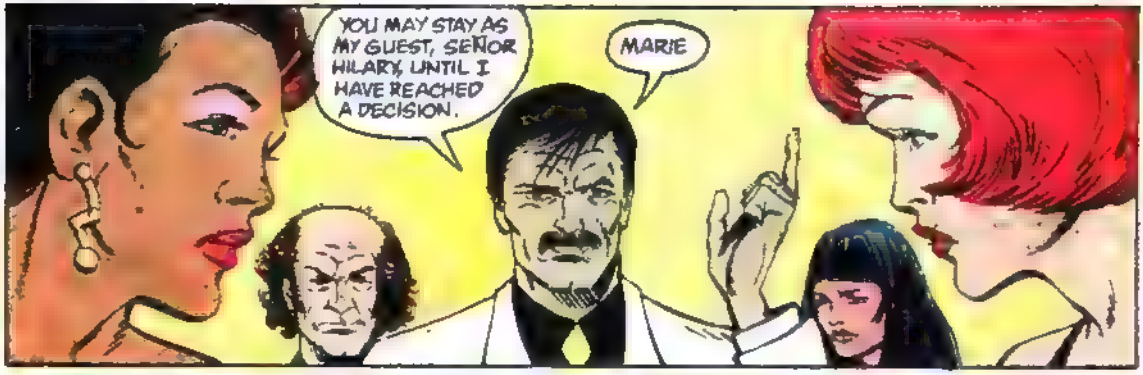

CARIBBEAN SEA
MEDELLIN
COLOMBIA
PERU
CUJO'S IN MEDELLIN. THE COKE'S IN THE JUNGLE.
CUE TO TAKE OUT THE FORTRESS WILL BE WHEN CUJO'S DEAD.

"CUJO'S GIVING A LARGE PARTY DOWN IN MEDELLIN. BOOMER, WE GOT YOU AND THE TWO WOMEN AN INVITE. WE'VE SET UP A COVER THAT YOU'RE A DRUG DEALER WHO WANTS TO OPEN UP AUSTRALIA; MARI AND THE ORCHID ARE YOUR 'WINDOW DRESSING'. THINK YOU CAN HANDLE IT?"

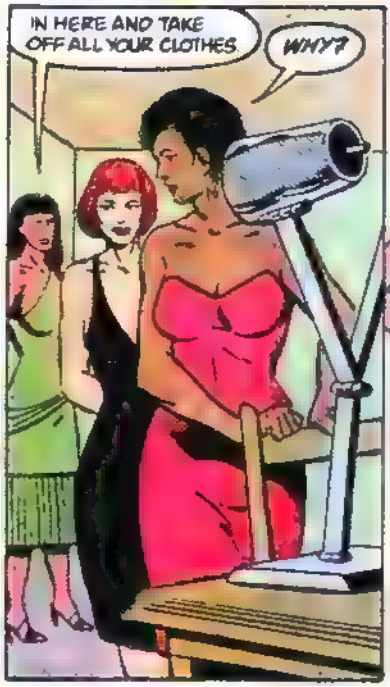
"NO WORRIES!"






YOU MAY STAY AS MY GUEST, SEÑOR HILARY, UNTIL I HAVE REACHED A DECISION.
MARIE

YOU TWO WILL FOLLOW MARIE. DO AS SHE TELLS YOU.
THIS WAY, GIRLS.

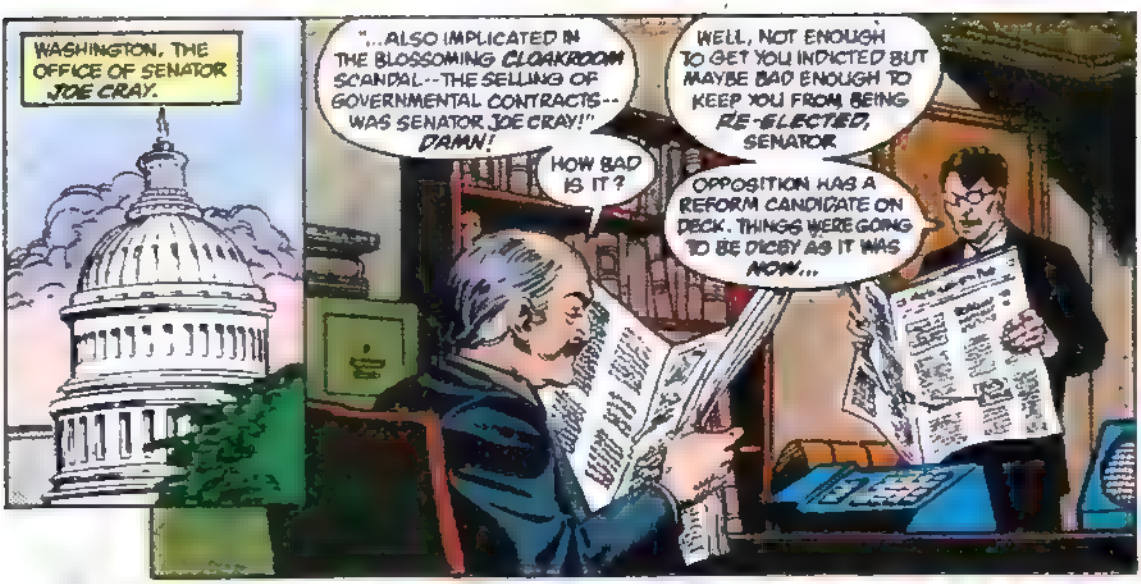

IN HERE AND TAKE OFF ALL YOUR CLOTHES.
WHY?

STRIP SEARCH.
AND I MUST WARN YOU: I KNOW ALL THE PLACES YOU MAY TRY TO CONCEAL SOMETHING.

LATER...
WELL, WASN'T THAT SPECIAL?
I'VE HAD GYNECOLOGICAL EXAMS THAT WEREN'T AS THOROUGH!

WHAT'S THIS?
AFRICAN TOTEM I CARRY FOR LUCK.

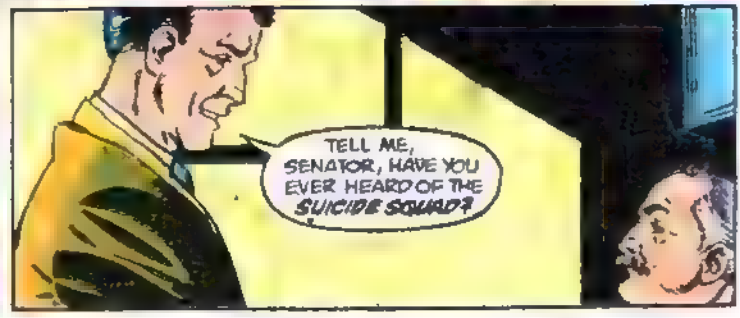
YOU WILL NEED IT--WORKING FOR SEÑOR CUJO.


WASHINGTON, THE OFFICE OF SENATOR JOE CRAY.
"...ALSO IMPLICATED IN THE BLOSSOMING CLOAKROOM SCANDAL--THE SELLING OF GOVERNMENTAL CONTRACTS--WAS SENATOR JOE CRAY!" DAMN!
HOW BAD IS IT?
WELL, NOT ENOUGH TO GET YOU INDICTED BUT MAYBE BAD ENOUGH TO KEEP YOU FROM BEING RE-ELECTED, SENATOR.
OPPOSITION HAS A REFORM CANDIDATE ON DECK. THINGS WERE GOING TO BE DICEY AS IT WAS NOW...

SENATOR? THERE'S A DEREK TOLLIVER HERE TO SEE YOU. HE WON'T STATE HIS BUSINESS, HE JUST SAYS IT'S VITAL HE SEES YOU
WHO IS HE?
SOME KOOK...

THIS KOOK'S GOING TO GET YOUR JOB
SENATOR, I'M SORRY! HE JUST BARGED PAST...! SHALL I CALL SECURITY?

YOU'VE GOT RE-ELECTION PROBLEMS, SENATOR, I'VE GOT INFO TO MAYBE SOLVE IT. IF YOU LIKE IT, I BECOME YOUR TOP AIDE.
HOW DARE YOU...
WAIT OUTSIDE, BILL.


TELL ME, SENATOR, HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE SUICIDE SQUAD?

THE COLOMBIAN JUNGLE.

I *HATE* THE GREAT OUTDOORS I WAS A GIRL SCOUT FOR TWO WEEKS...UNTIL I WENT ON A CAMP-OUT.

BET THERE'S BUGS. I *HATE* BUGS. PROBABLY HEADHUNTERS, TOO, FOR ALL I KNOW.

THERE *ARE*, BUT NOT THE KIND *YOU* MEAN.

THESE HEADHUNTERS ARE COMMUNIST GUERILLAS, A SPLINTER GROUP OF THE SILVER PATH GUERILLAS. GUARD CUJO'S COCAINE PLANTATION.

NINE HOURS UNTIL DAWN, WHEN McCABE IS SUPPOSED TO KILL CUJO.

COMMIES FOR COCAINE? C'MON!

FACT.

THEY VIEW COKE AS A WEAPON THE U.S. IS IMPALING ITSELF ON.

THEY "TAX" CUJO FOR THE PROTECTION AND USE THE MONEY TO BUY ARMS AND FINANCE THE REVOLUTION.

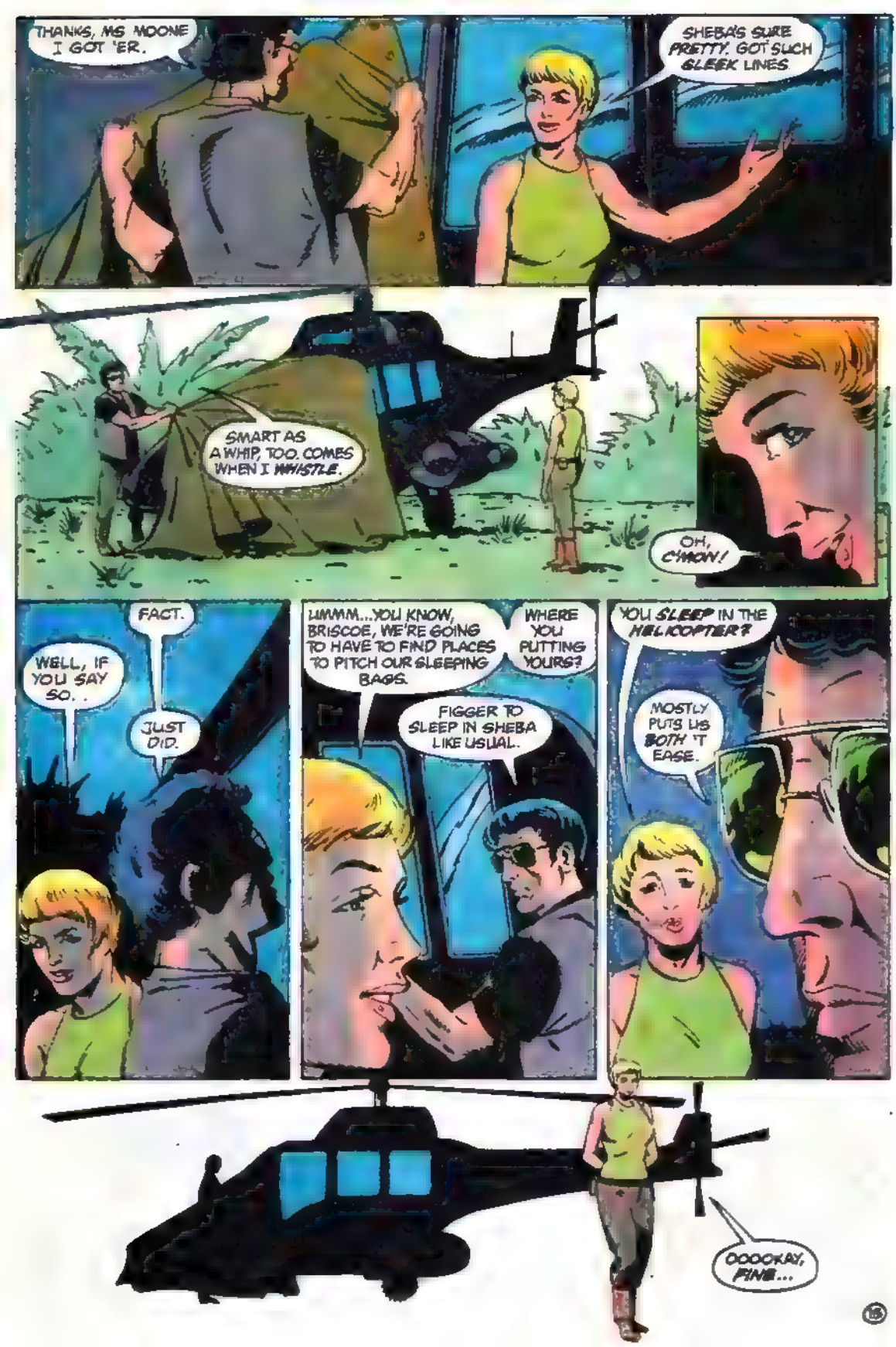
MAKES THEM SMARTER THAN THOSE SNORTING THE STUFF.

YOU APPROVE OF SNUFFING CUJO, BOWMAN? I DON'T THINK *I* COULD DO IT.

THERE'S LOTS OF THINGS YOU DO--IN THE NAME OF DUTY--THAT YOU'RE ASHAMED OF LATER. BUT YOU DO THEM.

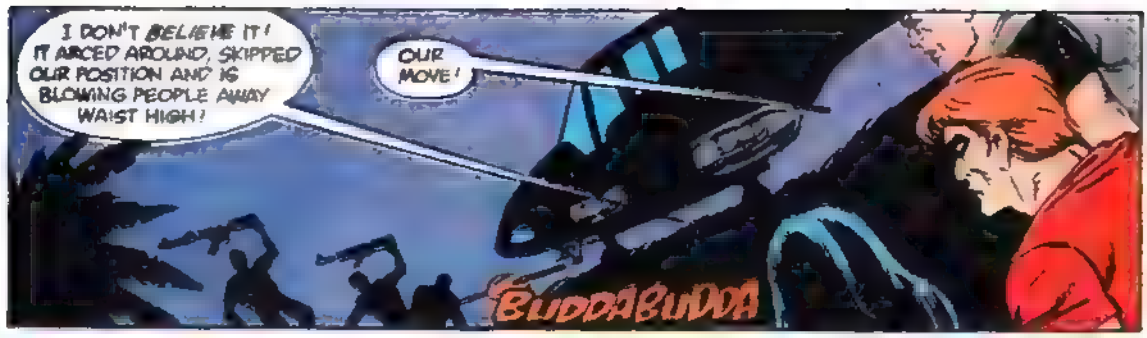
GOT *THAT* RIGHT!

YOU, TOO, HUH?


THANKS, MS MOONE I GOT 'ER.
SHEBA'S SURE PRETTY. GOT SUCH SLEEK LINES.
SMART AS A WHIP, TOO. COMES WHEN I WHISTLE.
OH, C'MON!
WELL, IF YOU SAY SO. .
FACT.
JUST DID.
UMMM...YOU KNOW, BRISCOE, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO FIND PLACES TO PITCH OUR SLEEPING BAGS.
WHERE YOU PUTTING YOURS?
FIGGER TO SLEEP IN SHEBA LIKE USUAL.
YOU SLEEP IN THE HELICOPTER?
MOSTLY PUTS US BOTH 'T EASE.
OOOOKAY, FINE...

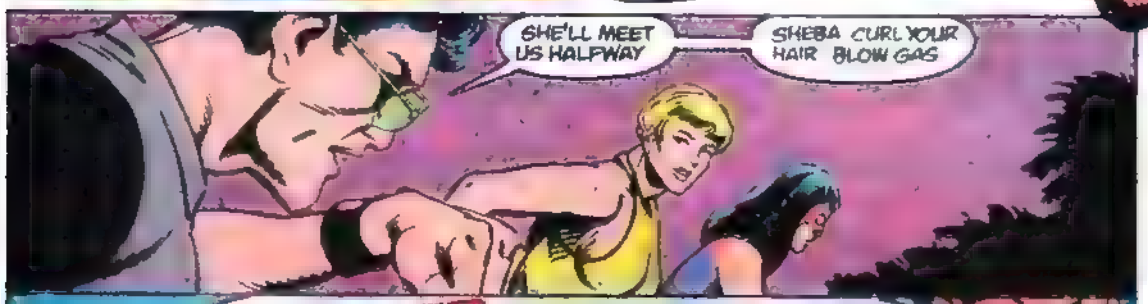
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

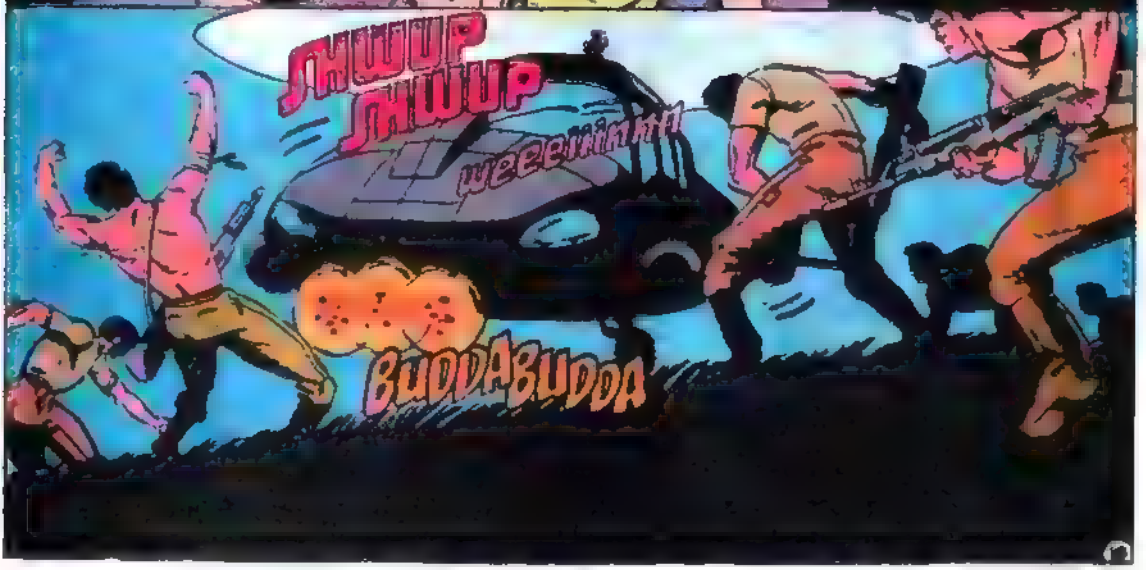
MY SHADOW POWER MAY BE ABLE TO GET US ALL OUT. EVE, YOU MAY HAVE TO BECOME ENCHANTRESS.
NO SWEAT. ME AND SHEBA GOT 'ER
phweet weet phweet phweet
SHEBA BLOW NOSE. ARC. TEN TO TWO, NINE TO TEN. SHORT PEOPLE.
<EH? WHAT DID I DO?>
KA-CHUNG
CLIK!
BUDDABUDDABU
FWIP
BUDDABUDDA

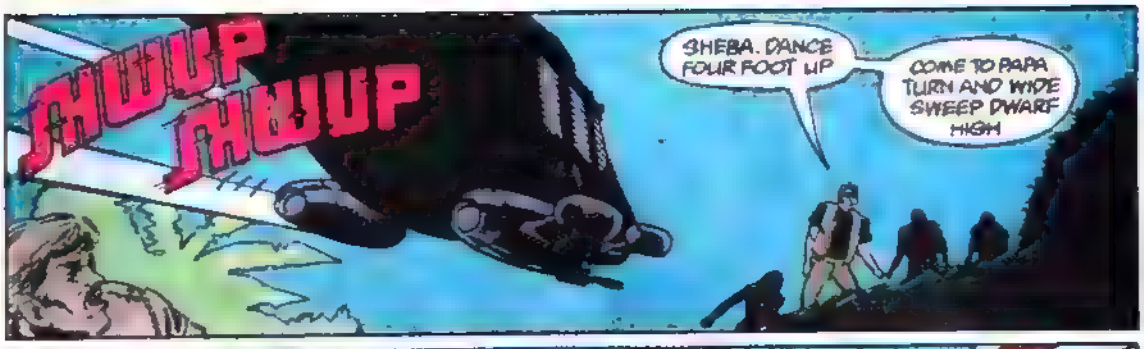

I DON'T BELIEVE IT! IT ARCED AROUND, SKIPPED OUR POSITION AND IS BLOWING PEOPLE AWAY WAIST HIGH!
OUR MOVE!
BUDDABUDDA

SCHWIP
SCHWIP
BUH-DOOOM!

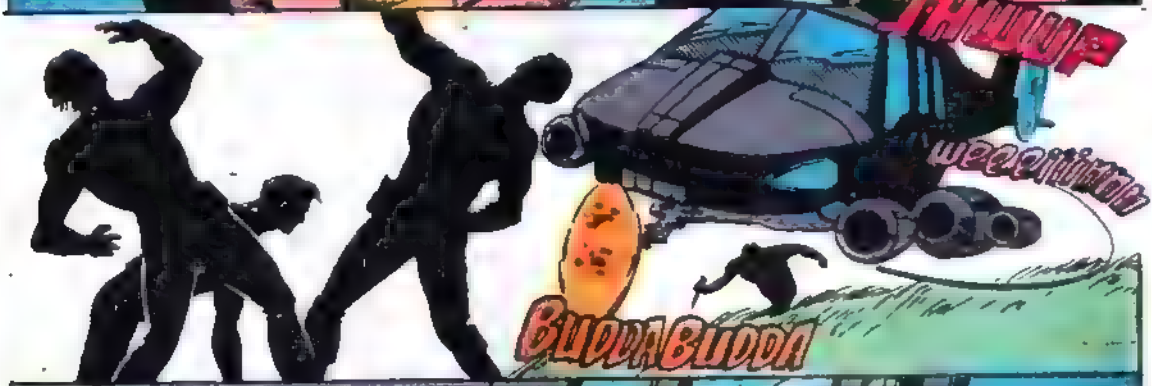
KRAK!
HEAD FOR SHEBA AND LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

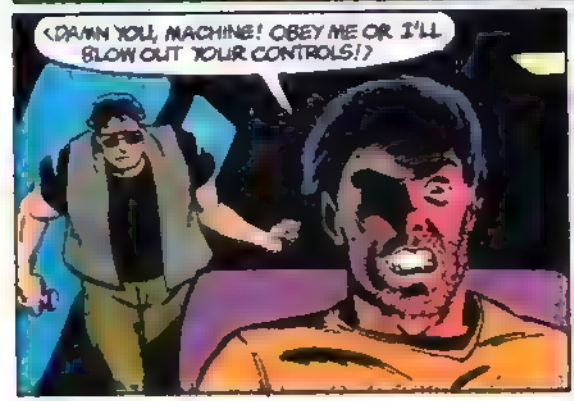

SHE'LL MEET US HALFWAY
SHEBA CURL YOUR HAIR BLOW GAS

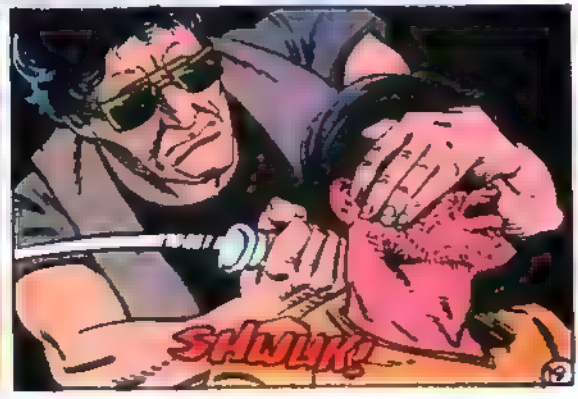

SHWUP SHWUP
WEEEEIIIIIII
BUDDABUDDA


SHWUP SHWUP
SHEBA. DANCE FOUR FOOT UP
COME TO PAPA TURN AND WIDE SWEEP DWARF HIGH

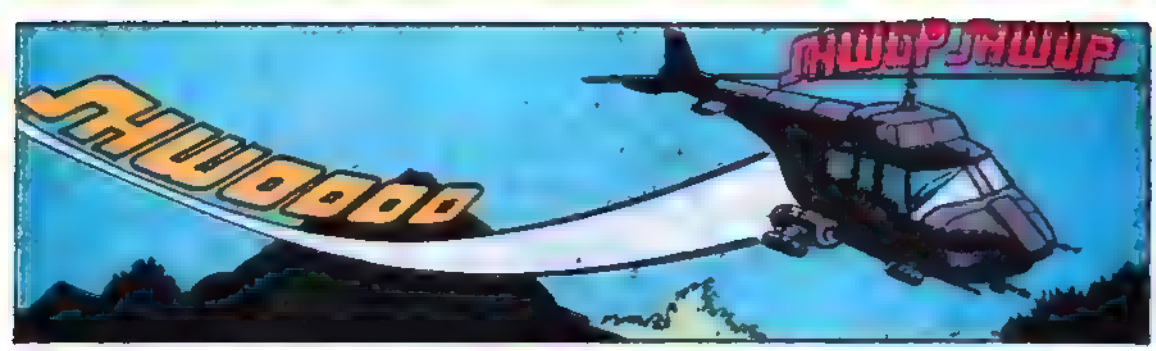
<STOP! DAMN YOU! STOP! I DID NOT TELL YOU TO GO!>

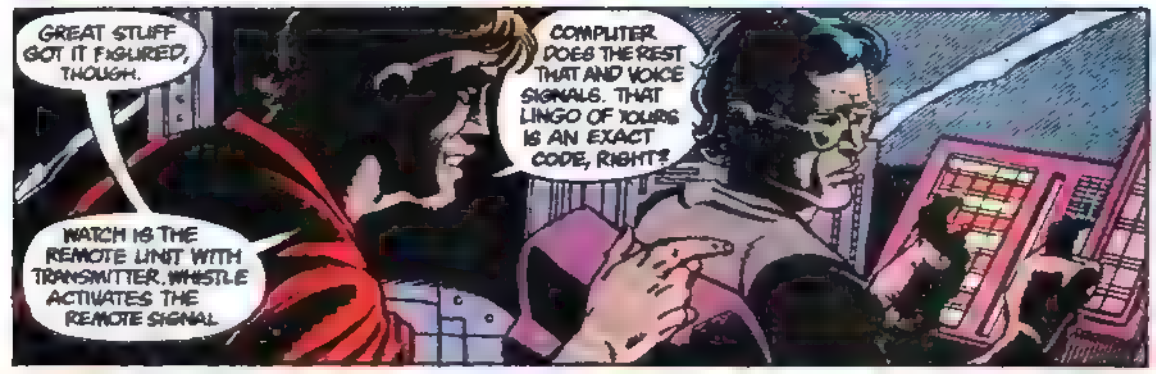

SHWUP
WEEOWWOOW
BUDDA BUDDA

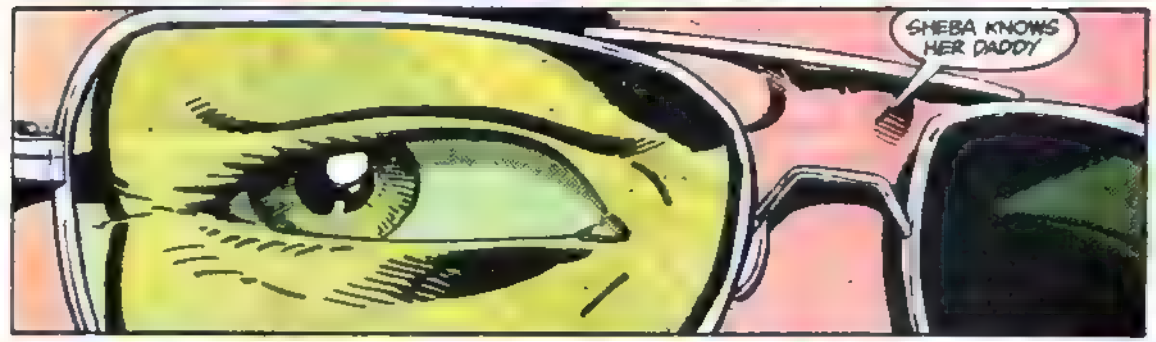

<DAMN YOU, MACHINE! OBEY ME OR I'LL BLOW OUT YOUR CONTROLS!>


SHWLIK!

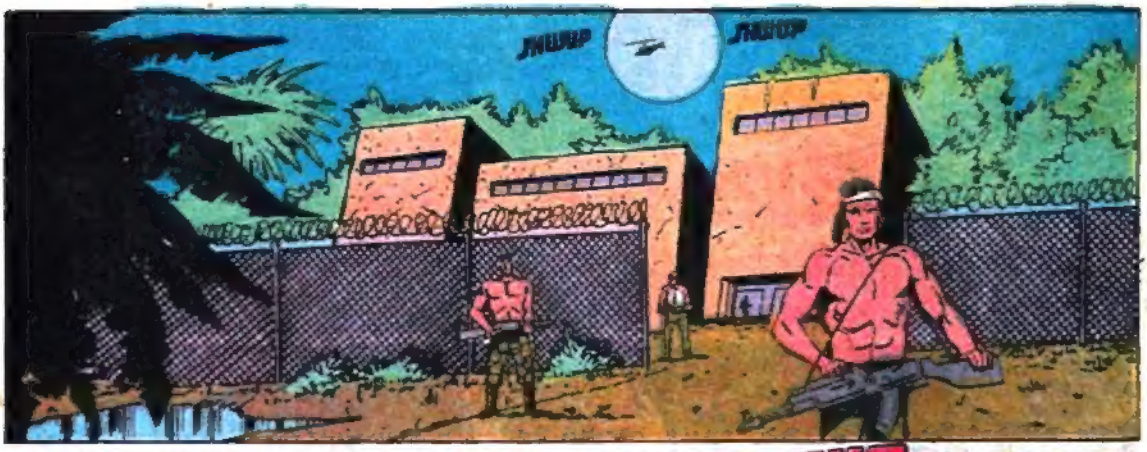
THAT'S MY SEAT.
THEY'RE BRINGING UP HEAVIER GUNS. HOW MUCH PLATING YOU GOT?
MORE'N YOU. WE TUCKED?
JUNE'S JUST GETTING ON
SHEBA. EVASIVE.
PEEL. HIGH 'N' HARD.
ŦHWUP ŦHWUP
AHHHHH!


WHUP WHUP
WHOOOOO


GREAT STUFF. GOT IT FIGURED, THOUGH.
WATCH IS THE REMOTE UNIT WITH TRANSMITTER. WHISTLE ACTIVATES THE REMOTE SIGNAL.
COMPUTER DOES THE REST THAT AND VOICE SIGNALS. THAT LINGO OF YOURS IS AN EXACT CODE, RIGHT?


SHEBA KNOWS HER DADDY

WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM.
WE WERE SUPPOSED TO WAIT AND GIVE THE OTHER TEAM A CHANCE TO KILL CUJO.
CAN'T WAIT. BOOGERS KNOW WE HERE ALERT TARGET
WE GONE.
WE'LL HAVE TO GO NOW
HIT IT, BRISCOE.
WHEEEEEEW



NEXT: THE RETURN OF *VIXEN* AND THE CONCLUSION TO **BLOOD AND SNOW!**

SUICIDE NOTES

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Dear Bob,

All my compliments to you and your crew—especially John!—on "Thrown to the Wolves"; it was indeed the best issue yet. In fact, the Firebird storyline has been the best of all SUICIDE SQUAD tales. I do think the Squad stories are best as multi-issue tales; the shorter stories in issues 3 and 4 were the least entertaining so far, and even the introductory Jihad plotline was a little rushed—three issues would have been preferable.

John's plotting is excellent. I was thoroughly engrossed in the story. The pacing was also excellent and it maintained a good level of suspense. I felt like I had read two issues at the end (I really got my 75¢ worth). The characterization was also superb—I am really enjoying the conflict between Flag and Deadshot. Other high points of the issue: the People's Heroes references to the Rocket Reds and Pozhar; the "Boom-Air"/Black Orchid sequence; the Enchantress' murderous attack on Pravda; Sheba to the rescue!

Now the few low points: Sickle and Molotov were too easily defeated (although the others' defeats were believable); the Squad's had another disaster! So far they have failed to destroy the Jihad, failed to prevent Godfrey's jailbreak, failed to capture Firestorm and failed to liberate Trigorin. Their only victory was the William Hell case. In spite of the fact that I loved this story, I wish they could have a few unqualified successes. Also, Flag has to become less conscience-filled. It may not have been desirable to want to kill those tourists or to sacrifice Nemesis, but these things are sometimes unavoidable. I wonder how long he can continue as leader.

Luke's pencils are better than ever. I am really happy he's pencilling this series since his JLA stint ended. I loved the moody shot of the People's Heroes on the splash page and the dramatic appearance of Sheba on page 19. I can't wait to see him draw Vixen again!

Bill E. Behrens
5233 North Long
Chicago, IL 60630

*****

Dear John, Robert, Luke, Todd and company,

Let me be clear from the start: I have never liked the People's Heroes because I consider them a ludicrous stereotype of the Russian people. I know that after eight years of Reagan it's highly fashionable to look at Russians as nationalistic comic relief villains, but the whole thing looks rather silly when you think about it. Having said that: I found issue #7 to be interesting enough to overlook the characterization of the People's Heroes to concentrate on the escape from Russia plot.

I liked the way the Penguin was characterized. His speech about his rights as a felon and his belief that he acts as an entrepreneur should be used as a textbook example to future Batman writers of how the character should be written. I remember a few years ago there was an attempt to make Pengy a psychotic killer, sort of an aristocratic version of the Joker. I hate seeing him written like that. He should always be portrayed as he was in this story—as a clever thief who thinks of himself as just another businessman trying to get his share. He worked out a lot better in this story than I ever thought he would. I hope someday that John can use the Catwoman in a story because he brings out the best in some of my favorite villains.

The art is improving somewhat but still suffers from a few "technical" glitches—not the least of which was having the Penguin walking around in a short-sleeve sports shirt in the middle of weather so terrible it even froze a huge lake.

I completely agree with your comments in the letters page of issue #3, that the operatives should wear their own costumes, however, eventually when heroes like Nightshade, Black Orchid, and Nemesis start appearing in public in *their* costumes fighting side-by-side with known criminals the public is going to think the heroes have gone bad.

T.E. Pouncey
Wichita, KS

Actually, T.E., the Penguin has often been established as being a cold weather character. He has survived worse weather as noted in the two-parter Doug Moench wrote circa DETECTIVE COMICS #540.

*****

Dear Bob,

I gotta agree with you, dude, SS #7 is the best issue yet. God, I don't see how you people can keep up this kind of quality and intensity! But if the book is consistently *half* this good, you can count on me for the long haul.

To be more specific, let me tell you my favorite parts: Nemesis characterized as the original good guy: he comforts June about the Enchantress; he stays behind in Moscow so Deadshot won't waste the tourists that the Squad robbed; he helps a sick Eve to the plane; and he won't leave Zoya Trigorin and ends up getting arrested! Whatta guy! Also, Boomerang is re-recruited and Penguin and Deadshot exchange observations on Soviet and American realities. To top it all off, enough irony to keep this English major happy as a clam. To wit: Trigorin doesn't even want to be saved, the American Embassy threatened to turn the Squad over to Soviet officials, and, as the KGB man said, "This time around, *everyone* has lost." I love it!

And, by the way, I really liked it that the Squad had to walk out of Russia (until they reached the plane, of course). I think this group will work best when you have fewer "super" types and more streetfighter/self-taught/one-power types. Eve works well in the group because her power had limits; ditto for June because she can't really be controlled and is totally unpredictable. Now, Deadshot and Boomerang work well because they're both extremely talented in their field, but they essentially don't do anything else (except in such cases as when we find out that Deadshot speaks fluent Russian—cool!).

Janette R. Gerdes
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*****

Dear Bob,

Well, they really botched this mission, didn't they? I'm speaking, of course, of the Suicide Squad and the conclusion of their Russian adventure. Not only did Zoya Trigorin get killed, but Nemesis wound up being left behind in the Soviet Union. Add to this the fact that the mission was a shambles. Although there were a variety of factors that contributed to it, I think one of the main reasons that they failed was lack of teamwork. Oh, sure, there was some teamwork there, the kind of teamwork that comes from knowing and trusting each other was

lacking. That is a major obstacle for the Squad and one that I'd like to see John continue to play up in future stories.

Although Penguin was willing to let those tourists be killed on page seven, I think in general he's been treated better here than anywhere else lately. As shown in this year's BATMAN ANNUAL, Cobblepot is making a serious attempt to go straight. And, although he did seem somewhat annoyed in places during the last few issues here, he seemed to me to be sincerely trying to help with the mission, not being as self-centered as he'd been in the past. Although he did suggest killing those tourists, he probably saw no other way of insuring their silence and the success of the mission.

T.J. Campbell
1225 Bay Bidge Road
Madison, WI 53716

*****

Dear Firebird Flightwriters,

Dudley DuReight?

I'm almost sorry that "Thrown to the Wolves" concluded the latest trilogy in SUICIDE SQUAD. There are so many things I enjoyed about it, so I hope you'll enjoy this indulgent, gushy letter of praise.

Desperation was the name of the game in every panel of the story. I was really concerned that the group wasn't going to make it out of Russia, and as it turned out, not all of them did. I'm anxious to know what will become of Nemesis, since he was the character that least deserved his fate. Thanks to a tight script and an exciting job on the art, this is the most unforgettable mission of the Suicide Squad yet!

Thanks for the return of Black Orchid, and with a major role in the rescue team to boot! She's as beautiful as ever! I loved how she "recruited" Captain Boomerang on page nine and how she took out Hammer without batting an eyelash! You simply must have a spotlight issue on this mystery lady sometime, with the rest of the Squad wondering who she really is, how she's connected, etc.

It's also great to see the People's Heroes put to good use here as the Soviet border guards. This type of villains crossover should be done more often in the DC line. Words can't express how exciting this battle was, watching Rick Flag and Deadshot kayo Molotov, Bronze Tiger whip Bolshoi, the Enchantress zap Pravda and Boomerang pound Sickle.

The conflicts within the Squad itself kept the tension mounting: between Rick Flag and Deadshot, between Deadshot and Nemesis, between Nemesis and Rick Flag, between June and Enchantress and Rick with himself. Extra nice touches were Tom Tresser offering to help Eve Eden, Zoya Trigorin offering to help Tom, Tom risking his life for Zoya's and June almost accidentally saying the "magic word."

Captain Boomerang was actually rather fun this time around, as an unlikely member of the rescue team and in saving Deadshot from the Enchantress. Something will have to be done about the group constantly having to knock her out, though.

Neil Ahlquist
2817 15th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55407

*****

Dear Bob,

Task Force X is a special group. They belong in action, and the "Flight of the Firebird" trilogy was a success precisely because John Ostrander kept things tense ... once in the Soviet Union, we had no cuts to Mrs. Waller biting her nails—true, we saw Captain Boomerang bring a woman back to his digs, but we didn't see him out on the town. Within an assignment, you can do a lot: the Enchantress, Deadshot, Flag, Nightshade and Nemesis became very real here, and even bit players such as the Captain, the Penguin and the Bronze Tiger were well-portrayed. (The lone exception was the Black Orchid: she doesn't talk much, does she?) However, what happens *after* a mission? The Penguin will presumably go free, and another assignment will come up, and...

I don't want to denigrate a formula, especially when the recent trilogy proved how viable it is. Nevertheless, you have a good core of regulars—Deadshot has become one of my favorites, and would be my choice for third-in-command of the team, after the Tiger—and I'd like to see them develop lives of their own. I'm not just speaking of romance, but of friendships, rivalries and conflicts. A good example would be having Rick Flag recognize his affinity with Deadshot—and either becoming his best friend or his bitterest enemy. Or having the Enchantress hound Deadshot because of the vertebra. Or revealing why Nightshade has joined Task Force X. Super-heroes always find things to do between phone booths, but what about Suicide Squad?

I have faith in you, John, Luke and Bob L.—these last three issues were dramatic, exciting, rich in *reelpolitik* and irony ... the People's Heroes were worthy opponents and I hope we'll see a rematch someday (Pravda must want to pick a vertebra of her own with the Enchantress). I'm looking forward to the meetings with the Doom Patrol and the JLI (after FIRESTORM ANNUAL #5, Flag's going to have an interesting time explaining to The Batman what he's doing since the Forgotten Heroes disbanded), and am confident that things will get better and better in the future. But at the moment, I still have a few doubts and thought I should pass them on. Please try to keep two ratios fairly equal: that between men and women in the Squad and that between heroes and villains. The more I see of Rick Flag, Nemesis and Nightshade (and to a small extent, the Orchid), the more I like them.

Bob, #7 was also my favorite issue so far.

Charles J. Sperling
37-15 Parsons Boulevard
Flushing, NY 11354

I think you have very little to worry about, Charles. We are constantly refining our cast and what they do with their lives and their allegiances. As you see this month, we have a pretty even mix of men and women—if anything, there are more key women than men for this caper. The heroes-villains equation is a bit tougher because we're dealing with bruised personalities. What makes someone a hero is a certain nobility and grace under pressure. Flag was a hero but got a lot of grief in return while Nemesis was a hero before he almost died. Nightshade is a heroine who has some very serious problems bubbling near the surface—we'll get to them this spring. And Enchantress started as a heroine and got warped by her power.

We'll be playing with these themes and personalities, even curing one or two bruises before too much longer.

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

Next month we continue the mission in Colombia and in true Squad style, everything goes wrong. We have Vixen and the Black Orchid trapped in the fortress and we have the rest of the team on the outside. The deciding act falls to June Moone who must summon forth Enchantress, but can the Squad keep her madness in check long enough to smash the drug pipeline? And how does Speedy react when confronted by corruption and greed to the nth degree? We have plenty of action for the wrap-up and a conclusion that should satisfy one and all.

Meantime, in just a week we will present DOOM PATROL/SUICIDE SQUAD SPECIAL #1. Learn what Flag is up to in this 48 page, no ads extravaganza by John, Paul Kupperberg, Erik Larsen and Bob Lewis. You'll be glad you did since the book also features Hawk and a few dozen Rocket Reds.

Enjoy your holiday season, stay healthy and hoist one for me. Until next month, as always, keep smiling!

—Bob Greenberger

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